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SOURCE Bashkimi.

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ISSUES ORDERS  
TO PROMOTE FOREST CONSERVATION

In Order No 17 of 31 March 1950, the Council of Ministers has reaffirmed the state ownership of Albanian forests and specified the measures to be taken for the following purposes: conservation and development of the forest wealth of Albania; protection of the forests from fire, from cutting and removal of wood, and from destruction; prevention of forest fires of cutting and removal of wood, and of damage to the forests; and prevention of the spread of harmful insects and disease in the forests. This order shall be effective 30 days after its publication in Bashkimi.

Forest conservation shall be the responsibility of the forestry service agencies, state agencies, mass organizations, and all citizens.

The People's Councils shall see that the forests are protected and shall spread propaganda among the people to arouse their vigilance against any danger to the forests.

Parents and guardians are responsible for damage caused by their young children, unless they prove that they have not failed to give proper supervision and were unable to prevent the damage.

Individuals and enterprises are responsible for damage caused by shepherds or workers in their employ while on duty. In any case, the enterprises are responsible for bringing the culprits to justice.

Anyone who without a permit removes sand, plants, humus, stones, seeds, etc., from the forests shall be fined as follows: 200 to 500 lek for each load carried by humans, 500 to 1,000 lek for each load carried by animals, and 1,000 to 2,000 lek for each load carried by wagon or motor vehicle. The maximum penalty shall be imposed in the case of forest seeds and roots, and the material shall be confiscated.

If only a small amount of material is taken without authorization, it may be replaced and the culprit may go unpunished.

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Between 1 April and 30 October, fires may not be lighted in the open, i.e., outside of houses or cabins, in forests, or within 200 meters of forests, except by forest workers, shepherds, travelers, etc., who live in forests because of the nature of their work. They are required to take all precautions against forest fires.

Between 1 April and 30 October, farmlands and pastures in forests or within 500 meters of a forest shall not be burned except by permission of the local General Committee. Limestone and charcoal, etc., may not be roasted within those limits. Industrial enterprises that burn fuel may not operate within 200 meters of a forest, or within 500 meters without permission from the Agriculture and Forestry Section.

Lighted cigarettes, matches, and other materials that may cause a fire shall not be thrown.

Hunting involving weapons that may cause fires is prohibited between 1 April and 29 October. Bees shall not be smoked without permission from the local General Committee.

Violations of the above provisions regarding the handling of fire are punishable by a fine of up to 5,000 lek.

The lighting of fires in new forests and the lighting of fires in any forests when the wind is strong is prohibited. Trees lying on the ground and hanging branches shall not be set afire. Violations of these provisions are punishable by a fine of up to 10,000 lek.

Anyone who discovers a fire burning in a forest or within 200 meters of a forest is required to put it out. If he cannot put it out himself, he shall immediately notify the local General Committee, the Army, the police, or any other government agency. If he is near a post-telephone-telegraph office he shall be permitted to notify the authorities of the fire without charge. Failure to give notice of the fire shall be punished according to law.

The People's Councils and forestry personnel, when notified of a fire, shall take immediate measures and mobilize all able-bodied residents to put out the fire. If the fire spreads, the Army shall be asked for help.

Persons called to put out the fire shall drop whatever work they are doing and shall take any necessary fire-fighting material with them.

All enterprises working in or near the forests shall be subject to the above obligations, and shall make their vehicles, workers, and all other facilities available for fighting fire.

Persons fighting fire shall stay at the fire until it has been put out completely. If the fire lasts several days, they shall be relieved by others if conditions permit. The People's Council in the area of the fire shall provide food for fire fighters who stay at the fire for more than one day.

Anyone who refuses to give his help or services in fighting a fire or who in any way evades his fire-fighting obligations shall be punished by a fine of not more than 5,000 lek.

Trees, branches, and sticks, including dry ones, standing or on the ground, shall not be cut or removed from the forests without authorization. Removal of bark, sap, and pitch, and cutting or damage to saplings in forested areas are prohibited. Violations of these provisions are punishable by fines.

Damage by livestock to reforested areas or where trees have been planted along roads, canals, watercourses, or in public parks shall be punished according to law.

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Clearing of forests and the transformation of forests, in whole or in part, into farms, pastures, fields, etc., without authorization is prohibited. Clearing of forests may be authorized when it would result in incontestable economic benefit and would cause no damage to the land, water, etc., or when it would be in the general interest or in the interest of national defense.

Clearing of forests is prohibited on the national boundaries, without the permission of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and along mountain motor roads, railroads, and main rivers within 290 meters thereof.

By special permission from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, selective cutting of forest trees and the cutting of planted trees may be permitted, provided that the normal condition of the vegetation and normal forest density are protected. Such cutting includes pruning, thinning, removing suckers, and cutting of old or dead wood.

With the approval of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the following types of forests may be declared protected forests: those that protect land from erosion; forests on a slope or on the water's edge or on land exposed to strong winds; forests that protect streams from drying up, land from flooding, and torrents; windbreaks and barriers against sand, etc.; forests that serve health purposes; forests that serve the national defense; natural parks for the conservation of plants and animals.

In protected forests, grazing, wood cutting (except when necessary), and all kinds of deforestation are prohibited.

During droughts, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry may prohibit, by special order, any lighting of fires in or near forests, and grazing in or near forests.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry shall determine specific measures to be taken against injurious insects and diseases.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry may inspect sawmills to make sure that lumber is being processed properly.

Violations of this order for which no punishment has been prescribed in previous legislation are punishable by a fine of not more than 5,000 lek. Penalties for offenses against protected forests shall be doubled.

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